

Bringing Espoo Convention to Citizens

This was the title of the project started on June 1st, 2018 by three organisations, namely European ECO Forum, Resource & Analysis Center "Society and Environment" (RACSE) and Oekobuero (Austria). The project primarily aimed at countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA). **The project objectives were** * To raise awareness of civil society organisations in EECCA about the developments under the Espoo Convention and its SEA Protocol and * To strengthen their capacity to act by enhancing exchange of best practices and advising them on obstacles they face.

The project was funded by the German Federal Environmental Ministry's Advisory Assistance Programme (AAP) for environmental protection in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and other countries neighbouring the European Union. It is supervised by the German Environment Agency (UBA).

The project came to an end in December 2018 but we have agreed to continue some limited communication, including Newsflash.

The responsibility for the content of this Newsflash lies with the authors.



December 2020

- Espoo Convention held its anniversary MOPs
- Espoo Convention 8th MOP: key outcomes

Espoo Convention held its anniversary MOPs

On December 8-11, 2020, Lithuania hosted 8th session of Meeting of the Parties to the Espoo Convention and 4th session Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on SEA (MOPs).

These MOPs mark thirty years of achievements under the Espoo Convention. On Friday, 11 December, at a high-level segment, delegates [celebrated](#) the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention in 1991, looking back to the Convention's roots, showcasing its significant achievements and discussing the outlook for its future development.

Andriy Andrushevych, speaking on behalf of the European ECO Forum and Resource & Analysis Center "Society and Environment", stated that from a stamped-signed document, the Convention has become a real instrument for environmental civil society organizations, in particular for the last 20 years. Today the Convention, together with a Protocol, means a complex multi-piece's process reaching far to regions, countries, local communities and citizens. **From a civil society perspective, the Espoo Convention is a success story;** its future we are building together with bigger or smaller steps: when we negotiate, when we organize a seminar or just translate a brief video about the Convention.

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A little reminder: The Espoo (EIA) Convention sets out the obligations of Parties to assess the environmental impact of certain activities at an early stage of planning. It also lays down the general obligation of States to notify and consult each other on all major projects under consideration that are likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact across boundaries. [Read more.](#)



ESPOO CONVENTION
The Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context



You can find all meeting documents through the following link:

<https://bit.ly/3aNFAGH>



Espoo Convention 8th MOP: key outcomes

Life-time extensions of nuclear power plants

[Guidance on application of the Convention to life-time extensions of nuclear power plants](#) (LTE) is a major expected outcome of this MOP. Its objective is to clarify whether and in what circumstances lifetime extensions of nuclear power plants require a transboundary environmental impact assessment in accordance with the Convention.

NGO community was looking forward to adoption of the guidance, which will unlock the consideration of several LTE cases by the Implementation Committee. The guidance was developed as a follow-up to [Ukrainian case](#), open by the Implementation Committee upon a complaint from Ecoclub-Rivne, a Ukrainian NGO, with legal assistance from European ECO Forum. The decision by 2014 Espoo Convention MOP in that case created some uncertainty regarding the applicability of the convention to other parties and cases.

A special ad hoc group (co-chaired by the UK and Germany) was mandated to draft a guidance on the issue, which was presented in 2020 for consideration by the parties. The compromise text proposed by the EU member states was fully supported by MOP in 2020. Despite some weaknesses, the guidance will assist Parties in the practical application of the Convention and to support the Implementation Committee in reviewing compliance by Parties with their obligations under the Convention, with a view to assisting them in fully meeting their commitments.

New strategic plan

The MOP adopted a new Long-term strategy and the action plan for the Convention and the Protocol. It has the following objectives:

- to set a strategic vision for the coming years, to address priorities and to meet new challenges, including those with respect to climate change, biodiversity, energy, land use and urban planning, agriculture, waste management and transport;
- to set priorities at the operational level, to ensure the best use of the limited resources of the Parties and the secretariat;
- to identify future activities, partnerships and funding mechanisms.

The strategy is focused on the following three strategic goals, which are set out in indicative order of priority: (a) Full and effective implementation of the Convention and the Protocol; (b) Increased impact by addressing new national, regional and global challenges; (c) Wider implementation of the Convention and the Protocol within and beyond the ECE Region. Each strategic goal is linked to priority objectives at the national and international levels. The strategic goals and priority objectives are to be implemented through periodic workplans.

Compliance and implementation

The MOP adopted general decisions on compliance, reporting and implementation (in particular, adopted the sixth review of implementation of the Convention). It also took several decisions on compliance by specific parties: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus and twice Ukraine.

Financial plans

The parties had a vivid discussion about the future financial arrangements and will continue to search for a better model of financing the work under the convention and its protocol. As of today, the contributions in 2017-2020 were insufficient, unpredictable, unequally distributed and unsustainable, with 3 Parties covering 60% of the total budget and 12 Parties not contributing at all.



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